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Reagan Legacy Foundation Awards Scholarships to Reagan Sailors

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Cameron C. Edy

Seven USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) Sailors and family members received a Reagan Legacy Foundation (RLF) scholarship, July 8.

Of those seven, Chief Religious Programs Specialist Juan Vences, Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Equipment) 2nd Class Alexander Ramirez and Aviation Ordnanceman 3rd Class Michael Cruz were presented a scholarship and award by Capt. Patrick Hannifin, Reagan's commanding officer, who emphasized how proud he was of the awardees.

"The scholarships awarded by the RLF offer our Sailors not only incentive to pursue higher education, but validation for improving themselves, their family, and the ship as a whole," said Hannifin. "It can be a tough application, but it's a great opportunity that always goes to a great cause, and I'm incredibly proud of Reagan's awardees this year."

The RLF, established by President Ronald Reagan's son Michael Reagan, was established to provide financial support to servicemembers and their families in pursuit of higher education.

The individual scholarship provides a maximum of \$1,000 for active duty Sailors, and \$2000 dollars for dependents, towards academic courses. Ramirez, one of the awardees, explained how important the funds were in pursuing his Master's degree.

“One of my courses costs \$2,000, and it’s hard to get financial aid at my level,” said Ramirez. “It definitely assisted me in paying off that course, and will allow me to go further in both my education and career.”

The RLF scholarship is awarded based on three criteria: academic achievement, demonstrated leadership, and a brief essay about former President Reagan. Of the seven scholarship applicants, six were on behalf of dependents enrolled in higher education. Cruz, one of the awardees, was proud to accept the scholarship on behalf of his wife.

“My wife dropped everything stateside to move out here with me,” said Cruz. “I want her to get an education. But with loans, and debt, that comes with her degree, the entire process is getting expensive. This scholarship is definitely going to help us out.”

Whether education opportunities are utilized by the Sailor or their dependents, they can only be effective if applied for. Lt. Cmdr. Gary Hudson, Reagan’s administration officer, encourages Sailors and their families to apply for these unique opportunities.

“These opportunities are all about wanting to better yourself, both personally and professionally,” said Hudson. “One of the things I’m constantly telling my Sailors is to take advantage of the opportunities that become available. If you don’t, they’ll be given to someone else. You don’t get selected if you don’t apply. This scholarship is one of many opportunities the Navy offers, that everyone should at least try to apply to.”

Ronald Reagan, the flagship of Carrier Strike Group 5, provides a combat-ready force that protects and defends the collective maritime interests of its allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region.

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